

# **Earned Value Promotion**

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### **What is the Earned Value Promotion?**

The Earned Value Promotion will be offered to mailers who use Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) enclosures. Mailers must register their Mailer IDs (MIDs) and permit(s) to which future earned credits will be applied on the Business Customer Gateway.

BRM and CRM pieces that customers return to the mailer and have a valid Intelligent Mail® barcode (IMb®) with a registered MID will be counted. At the end of the promotion, the earned value assigned to BRM will be multiplied by total BRM pieces counted and the earned value assigned to CRM will be multiplied by the total CRM pieces counted. Once the mailer accepts their credits in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG), they will be applied to the enrolled permit(s). The mailer can apply the earned credits to future mailings of First-Class Mail® Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and Standard Mail® letters and flats.

#### **Why is the U.S. Postal Service® offering the 2016 Earned Value Promotion?**

The U.S. Postal Service is offering the 2016 Earned Value Promotion to help slow the decline of First-Class Mail® in general and Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) in particular. As technology continues to disrupt the mail volume, the U.S. Postal Service® would like to ensure reply mail remains a relevant part of the First-Class Mail marketing mix. The 2016 Earned Value Promotion is designed to encourage mailers to continue providing BRM and CRM enclosures in their outbound mailings.

#### **Who can participate in the 2016 Earned Value Promotion?**

The 2016 Earned Value Promotion will be offered to mailers who have Business Reply Mail (BRM) and Courtesy Reply Mail (CRM) enclosures.

#### **How will my company benefit from participating in the 2016 Earned Value Promotion?**

Your company will benefit from participating in the 2016 Earned Value Promotion by earning credits that can be applied to future mailings of First-Class Mail Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and Standard Mail® letters and flats.

#### **Where can I find the requirements to participate in the promotion?**

Program requirements can be found on at:  
<https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm?page=mailingpromotions>

It is recommended that you read this document first.

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### **PROGRAM PARAMETERS**

**What are the key promotion dates?**

**Registration Period:**

February 15<sup>th</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

**Promotion Period:**

April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Eligible Mail:**

Business Reply Mail and Courtesy Reply Mail

**Acceptance Period for Credits:**

The credits will be released when the mailer agrees to their volumes when the promotion ends. The volumes must be accepted or disputed by September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 otherwise the credits will be forfeited.

**Earned Value Credits:**

\$0.02 per BRM and CRM pieces counted based on their MID's for first time mailers or those who did not meet or exceed each BRM and CRM MID's previous total counts from the 2015 Earned Value Promotion.

\$0.03 per BRM and CRM pieces counted when mailers meet or exceed each BRM and CRM MID's previous total counts from the 2015 Earned Value Promotion.

Credits are available for their use once they have been released to the respective permit(s).

**Expiration Date for Credits:**

December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016

### **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

**How do I register for the Earned Value Promotion?**

Navigate to the Business Customer Gateway (BCG): <https://gateway.usps.com> and click on "Register for free" if you are not a USPS Business Customer. Then follow the prompts by entering the required fields to create a new business account. You will receive an automatic email confirming that your United States Postal Service Online Business Account has been activated. Then you will follow the next three steps to continue registering for the Earned Value Promotion:

- From the Mailing Services page you will select the [Promotions Incentives](#) module link and within that area choose the Earned Value Promotion
- Verify that all of your company locations, MIDs, and permit(s) are visible and selectable
- Follow the menu tabs until you are enrolled

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### **What do I do if I already have a Business Customer Gateway (BCG) account?**

If you already have a BCG account, you will sign in at: <https://gateway.usps.com> and enter your user name and password. Then you will follow the next three steps to continue registering for the Earned Value Promotion:

- From the Mailing Services page you will select the Promotions Incentives module link and within that area choose the Earned Value Promotion Verify that all of your company locations, MIDs, and permit(s) are visible and selectable
- Follow the menu tabs until you are enrolled

### **What are the registration requirements?**

Mailers must register their MIDs and their permit(s) on the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) and agree to participate in a survey about the promotion.

### **What mail is eligible for the 2016 Earned Value Promotion?**

The mail that is eligible for the 2016 Earned Value Promotion is Business Reply Mail and Courtesy Reply Mail with a valid IMb and a registered MID. Only BRM and CRM pieces that are mailed back to the mailer will be counted.

### **How do I know that I am an Origin IMb TRACING™ customer?**

An Origin IMb Tracing™ customer does not have their MIDs appear in the IMb on their BRM and CRM mail pieces.

### **How do I participate in the 2016 Earned Value Promotion if I am an Origin IMb TRACING™ customer?**

Origin IMb TRACING™ customers who want to participate in the promotion will need to:

- Register their IMb Tracing MIDs and permit(s) in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG)
- Request the Origin IMb Tracing™ spreadsheet from the Earned Value Program Office or download it at enrollment
- Enter their MIDs, CRIDs, and your ZIP™ information
  - These are the ZIP+4® or ZIP+4+2 that are encoded in the IMb on your BRM and CRM
- Email the completed form to the Program Office at: [EarnedValue@usps.gov](mailto:EarnedValue@usps.gov)

### **I am a MSP; can I register for my customer?**

A MSP may register for their customer if the MIDs and associated permit(s) accounts belong to the MSP. If a MSP registers his/her permit(s) and the credits are applied to those permit(s), it is between the MSP and their customer to decide how those credits are distributed.

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### **MAILPIECE SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **What are the mailing submission requirements?**

There are no special submission requirements. BRM and CRM pieces can be enclosed in any class, category or shape of mail.

### **MAILPIECE/MAILING CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **What are the mail piece/mailing content requirements?**

The Business Reply Mail and the Courtesy Reply Mail pieces must contain the Intelligent Mail barcode with the Mailer ID encoded to qualify. All qualifying reply mail must contain an Earned Value Promotion preregistered MID. Postcard and letter-size BRM must be barcoded with a valid and properly used ZIP+4 code on the mail piece and the same ZIP +4 code must be encoded within the IMb. The IMb on all BRM and CRM pieces must contain the barcode ID, service type ID, and correct ZIP+4 routing code. Permit holders must use the ZIP+4 codes and the IMb assigned by the USPS.

### **EARNED VALUE CREDITS CALCULATION**

#### **How are the credits calculated?**

At the end of the promotion, the earned value assigned to BRM will be multiplied by total BRM pieces counted based on each MID. The award value assigned to CRM will be multiplied by the total CRM pieces counted based on each MID.

#### **First Time Participants in the Earned Value Promotion:**

Earned Value = \$0.02 x Total BRM Pieces Counted Based On Each MID

Earned Value = \$0.02 x Total CRM Pieces Counted Based On Each MID

#### **Previous Participants in the Earned Value Promotion:**

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total BRM pieces counted based on each MID if the mailer meets or exceeds each BRM MID's previous total counts from the 2015 Earned Value Promotion.

Earned Value = \$0.03 x Total CRM pieces counted based on each MID if the mailer meets or exceeds each CRM MID's previous total counts from the 2015 Earned Value Promotion.

*Note: Previous mailers who do not meet or exceed their previous total BRM pieces counted based on each MID will earn \$0.02 per counted BRM piece. Previous mailers who do not meet or exceed their previous total CRM pieces counted based on each MID will earn \$0.02 per counted BRM piece. This calculation will be performed for each enrolled MID.*

#### **How are the credits processed?**

The credits are scanned on Reply Mail pieces from April 1 through June 30, 2016. The credits will not be scanned on pieces after June 30, 2016, even if the outbound mail pieces were sent prior to that date. Additionally, the credits cannot be scanned on reply pieces that do not contain an IMb.

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### **How do you use your credits?**

To use the credits, you will need to submit your Postage Statement via Postal Wizard, Mail.Dat, or Mail.XML. On the Postage Statement you will enter “RR” as the promotion code which will instruct the PostalOne! to use the credits from the permit(s) that you requested. If you are using Postal Wizard, you will use the drop-down menu to select the Earned Value Promotion when completing the fields for what incentive you want to apply to that mailing.

### **How many permit(s) can I select for the credits?**

There is no limit on the number of permit(s) you can select. You will need to determine the proportion of the earned credit that will be applied to each permit and the total percentage for the allocated credits needs to equal 100%.

### **Am I allowed to change my permit(s) before USPS applies my credits?**

The mailer can change the permit(s) and the allocation of the credits up to the point the credits are accepted by the mailer.

### **When will the credits be distributed to our permit(s)?**

The credits will be distributed to your permit(s) once you agree to them.

### **Where are the reply pieces scanned?**

The IMb barcodes are scanned and captured as part of our regular mail processing in IM-VIS and counted in the Alternate Postage System. The counts are then transferred to the Business Customer Gateway (BCG) where the credits will be calculated and displayed in the Mailing Activity Report.

### **What are the mail classes that I may apply my credits to?**

You may apply the credits to future mailings of First-Class Mail Presort and Automation cards, letters and flats, and Standard Mail® letters and flats.

### **What are the permit types that I may apply my credits to?**

The permit types that you may apply your credits to are Meter, Precancel, Permit Imprint, OMAS Meter, and OMAS Permit Imprint.

### **How do you use the credits from a Metered permit?**

If a mailer has selected a Metered permit the credits can only be applied to postage balances that are due at the time of mailing and cannot be credited to metered amounts.

### **How do you use the credits when you use a Meter?**

Mailers who wish to use the credits and use a Meter must apply a reduced promotion amount to each piece in the mailing. They must claim the Earned Value Promotion as “RR” in the CCR field

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or choose the Earned Value Reply Mail Promotion in the drop-down menu in the Postal Wizard. The mailer then uses the credit to pay for the remaining postage. The VAR/CVAR mailers, all options are available: “Lowest”, “Correct”, and “Neither”. For all other mailers, the only option is “Neither”.

### **Why is the Activity Report displaying “Incomplete”?**

The Activity Report show the number of BRM and CRM pieces counted for an enrolled MID during the promotion period. This counting activity is scheduled to begin April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016. Therefore, a mailer would not yet see any pieces and the status would be displayed as “Incomplete” before April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.

### **Why are my BRM and CRM permits not eligible under the Payment Accounts Tab?**

The Payment Accounts Tab is where you chose to place your credits in. The type of permit(s) that are eligible are a Meter, Permit Imprint, Precancel, OMAS Meter, and OMAS Permit Imprint. Therefore, your Business Reply accounts are not eligible. If you use a Mail Service Provider then you may use their permit(s) but you will need to discuss this with them.

### **Why do I need to monitor my Activity Report on a weekly basis?**

We strongly encourage our customers to monitor their Activity Report on a weekly basis. Our business rules to convert scans into piece counts require that we do periodic look-backs. It could happen, for example, that a piece was counted yesterday when today we see another scan. In that case, we reduce the count for yesterday by one and add it to today's count. This leads to fluctuations in the data displayed in the Earned Value Report. Thus, comparing volumes on a weekly basis is a better way to monitor the CRM and BRM counts.

### **What happens when a customer's mail counts are different from what reported counts are showing?**

The actual count may differ from reporting counts because scans are machine based. Therefore a variance of around +/- 3% can be expected.

### **If I do not agree with the credits/volumes, can I dispute them?**

Yes, you may **only** dispute your **BRM** credits/volumes. Currently there is not a process to dispute your CRM credits/volumes.

### **If I have a CAPS account at the Post Office, would any credit I get be applied to my CAPS account?**

The credit can only be transferred to permit(s), NOT to CAPs accounts.

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### **USPS TERMINOLOGY**

#### **What is an Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb)?**

An IMb is a 65 – bar Postal Service barcode used to sort and track letters and flats. It allows mailers to use a single barcode to participate in multiple Postal Service programs simultaneously, expands mailers ability to track individual mail pieces, and provides greater mail stream visibility.

#### **What is the Business Customer Gateway (BCG)?**

The Business Customer Gateway (BCG) is a portal that gives you a single entry point for Postal Service on-line business services.

#### **What is a Customer Registration ID (CRID)?**

A CRID is a unique ID for a company name and location combination. The CRID is automatically assigned when you select a Business Account.

#### **What is a Mailer Identifier (MID)?**

A MID is assigned by the Postal Service and used to identify the mailer. It is part of the Intelligent Mail barcode (IMb).

#### **What is a permit account?**

Permit account is the method used to pay for mail, such as: automation First-Class Mail and Standard priced letters and flats. More information can be found on USPS.com:

<https://www.usps.com/business/postage-options.htm>

#### **What is a Mail Service Provider (MSP)?**

A MSP, also referred to as a Mailing Agent, is a company or entity that performs one or more of the following functions on behalf of other companies or organizations: designs, prepares, processes, sorts, or otherwise prepares postcards, letters, flats or packages for acceptance and delivery to the Postal Service.

#### **What is the Alternate Postage System and how can I view the credits available?**

The Postal Services scans IMbs as part of the of the regular mail processing. Those scans are captured and eventually transferred to the Alternate Postage System. The Alternate Postage System converts scans into piece counts. Those piece counts become the basis for calculating the Earned Credit in the Business Customer Gateway (BCG).

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### **What is a Business Service Administrator (BSA)?**

- Key contact for a Business Location for the management of the selected Service
- Approves and deactivates all company user requests for that Service at a business location
- Establishes the business locations (CRIDS) where permits and Mailer IDS will be linked

### **BUSINESS CUSTOMER GATEWAY (BCG) AND EARNED VALUE ENROLLMENT**

### **How is the BSA assigned?**

- Business Customer Gateway (BCG) sign up process is such that the person who requests access to a business service from a new business location is prompted to assume the BSA role.
- If person declines, the service request goes into a pending status until there is a BSA for the Service at the Business Location
- BSA may delegate additional approved company members to the BSA role

### **What happens if I do not accept the BSA role?**

If you do not accept the BSA role for this service then all requests or services will be pending and you will be unable to proceed until someone accepts this role.

### **What do I do if I get the “Pending External BSA” message?**

If you get the "Pending External BSA" messaging, it means that your request requires a Business Service Administrator (BSA) for the Manage Mailing Activity approval. The BSA is an individual in your organization who has the authority in the system to approve your request. The program office does not have the contact information for this person, but the PostalOne Help Desk does. We recommend emailing the Help Desk and requesting the BSA name and contact info for your company. Give the CRID and Business Customer Gateway (BCG) service you are requesting access.

The USPS Help Desk can be reached at: (800) 522-9085 or [postalone@email.usps.gov](mailto:postalone@email.usps.gov).

### **For which locations should I become the BSA?**

It is generally recommended that you become the BSA if no BSA exists for a service and location combination. You should become the BSA if you want to manage other user's access to the service for a particular location.

If a service requires BSA approval, there must be a BSA established for your company's mailing locations before members of your company can gain access to the service for those locations.



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Otherwise the request for the service will remain in “pending”. After 25 days, if the BSA role is not filled, your request will automatically be purged, without notification.

### **For which locations should I become the Business Service Administrator (BSA) for Incentive Programs?**

You should become the Incentive Programs BSA of a location if you are elected by your company to perform this role. The Incentive Programs BSA must approve all requests from other users to gain access to the service. As a result, there must be an Incentive Programs BSA for each location that you wish to register in the Incentive Programs service.

When requesting to become Incentive Programs BSA for a location, the request will be pending until the BSA for Manage Mailing Activity (MMA) for that location approves your request. If there is no BSA for Manage Mailing Activity, you can request this role. The request to become MMA BSA is approved automatically by the system when the role is vacant. If already pending, your request to become Incentive Programs BSA will be approved immediately by the system. Otherwise, if you are not to assume the Incentive Programs BSA role, you will have to wait until the Incentive Programs BSA approves your request.

### **REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Section	Reason For Revision	Version
1-20-2016	Entire Document	Updated to 2016 FAQs	2